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A
REPRESENTATION

TO HIS
MAJESTY,

MOVED IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
EDMUND BURKE,

AND SECONDED BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WINDHAM,

On MONDAY, JUNE 14, 1784, and negatived.

WITH
A PREFACE and NOTES.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. DEBRETT, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE,
IN PICCADILLY, 1784.

REPERESENTATION

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P R E F A C E.

THE Representation now given to the Public relates to some of the most essential privileges of the House of Commons. It would appear of little importance, if it were to be judged by its reception in the place where it was proposed. There it was rejected without debate. The subject matter may, perhaps, hereafter appear to merit a more serious consideration. Thinking men will scarcely regard the *penal* dissolution of a Parliament as a very trifling concern. Such a dissolution must operate forcibly as an example; and it much imports the people of this kingdom to consider what lesson that example is to teach.

The late House of Commons was not accused of an interested compliance to the will of a Court. The charge against them was of a different nature. They were charged with being actuated by an extravagant spirit of independency. This species of offence is so closely connected with merit; this vice bears so near a resemblance to virtue; that the flight of an House of Commons above the exact temperate medium of independence, ought to be correctly ascertained, lest we give encouragement to dispositions of a less generous nature, and less safe for the people; we ought to call for very solid and convincing proofs of the existence, and of the magnitude too of the evils, which are charged to an independent spirit, before we give sanction to any measure, that by checking a

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spirit so easily damped, and so hard to be excited, may affect the liberty of a part of our Constitution, which, if not free, is worse than useless.

The Editor does not deny, that by possibility such an abuse may exist: But *primâ fronte*, there is no reason to presume it. The House of Commons is not, by its complexion, peculiarly subject to the distempers of an independent habit. Very little compulsion is necessary, on the part of the people, to render it abundantly complaisant to Ministers, and favourites of all descriptions. It required a great length of time, very considerable industry and perseverance, no vulgar policy, the union of many men and many tempers, and the concurrence of events which do not happen every day, to build up an independent House of Commons. Its demolition was accomplished in a moment; and it was the work of ordinary hands. But to construct is a matter of skill; to demolish, force and fury are sufficient.

The late House of Commons has been punished for its independence. That example is made. Have we an example on record, of an House of Commons punished for its servility? The rewards of a Senate so disposed, are manifest to the world. Several Gentlemen are very desirous of altering the constitution of the House of Commons: But they must alter the frame and constitution of human nature itself, before they can so fashion it by any mode of election, that its conduct will not be influenced by reward and punishment; by fame and by disgrace. If these examples take root in the minds of men, what Members hereafter will be bold enough not to be corrupt? Especially as the King's highway of obsequiousness is so very broad and easy. To make a passive Member of Parliament, no dignity of mind, no principles of honour, no resolution, no ability,

ability, no industry, no learning, no experience are in the least degree necessary. To defend a post of importance against a powerful enemy, requires an Elliot;—a drunken invalid is qualified to hoist a white flag, or to deliver up the keys of the fortress on his knees.

The Gentlemen chosen into this Parliament, for the purpose of this surrender, were bred to better things; and are no doubt qualified for other service. But for this strenuous exertion of inactivity, for the vigorous task of submission and passive obedience, all their learning and ability are rather a matter of personal ornament to themselves, than of the least use in the performance of their duty.

The present surrender, therefore, of rights and privileges, without examination, and the resolution to support any Minister given by the secret advisers of the Crown, determines not only on all the power and authority of the House, but it settles the character and description of the men who are to compose it; and perpetuates that character as long as it may be thought expedient to keep up a phantom of popular representation.

It is for the chance of some amendment before this new settlement takes a permanent form, and while the matter is yet soft and ductile, that the Editor has re-published this piece, and added some notes and explanations to it. His intentions, he hopes, will excuse him to the original mover, and to the world. He acts from a strong sense of the incurable ill effects of holding out the conduct of the late House of Commons, as an example to be shunned by future representatives of the people.

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M O T I O N,

RELATIVE TO THE

S P E E C H from the T H R O N E.

Lunæ, 14^o Die Junij, 1784.

A MOTION was made, That a representation be presented to his Majesty, most humbly to offer to his Royal consideration, that the Address of this House upon his Majesty's Speech from the Throne, was dictated solely by our conviction of his Majesty's own most gracious intentions towards his people, which, as we feel with gratitude, so we are ever ready to acknowledge with chearfulness and satisfaction.

Impressed with these sentiments, we were willing to separate from our general expressions of duty, respect, and veneration to his Majesty's royal person and his princely virtues, all discussion whatever with relation to several of the matters suggested, and several of the expressions employed, in that speech.

That it was not fit or becoming, that any decided opinion should be formed by his faithful Commons, on that speech, without a degree of deliberation adequate to the importance of the object.

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Having

Having afforded ourselves due time for that deliberation, we do now most humbly beg leave to represent to his Majesty, that, in the speech from the Throne, his Ministers have thought proper to use a language of a very alarming import, unauthorized by the practice of good times, and irreconcilable to the principles of this Government.

Humbly to express to his Majesty, that it is the privilege and duty of this House to guard the Constitution from all infringement on the part of Ministers; and, whenever the occasion requires it, to warn them against any abuse of the authorities committed to them: but it is very lately*, that, in a manner not more unseemly than irregular and preposterous, Ministers have thought proper, by admonition from the Throne implying distrust and reproach, to convey the expectations of the people to us, their sole representatives†; and have presumed to caution us, the natural guardians of the Constitution, against any infringement of it on our parts.

This dangerous innovation we, his faithful Commons, think it our duty to mark; and as these admonitions from the Throne, by their frequent repetition, seem intended to lead gradually to the establishment of an usage, we hold ourselves bound thus solemnly to protest against them.

This House will be, as it ever ought to be, anxiously attentive to the inclinations and interests of its constituents: nor do we desire to straiten any of the avenues to the Throne, or to either House of Parliament.

* See King's Speech, Dec. 5, 1782, and May 19, 1784.

† "I will never submit to the doctrines I have heard this day from the Woolfsack, that the other House [House of Commons] are the only representatives and guardians of the people's rights, I boldly maintain the contrary—I say this House [House of Lords] is equally the representatives of the people." *Lord Shelburne's Speech, April 8, 1778. Vide Parliamentary Register, vol. 10, page 392.*

liament. But the ancient order, in which the rights of the people have been exercised, is not a restriction of these rights. It is a method providently framed in favour of those privileges, which it preserves and enforces by keeping in that course which has been found the most effectual for answering their ends. His Majesty may receive the opinions and wishes of individuals under their signatures, and of bodies corporate under their seals, as expressing their own particular sense: and he may grant such redress as the legal powers of the Crown enables the Crown to afford. This, and the other House of Parliament, may also receive the wishes of such corporations and individuals by petition. The collective sense of his people his Majesty is to receive from his Commons in Parliament assembled. It would destroy the whole spirit of the Constitution, if his Commons were to receive that sense from the Ministers of the Crown, or to admit them to be a proper or a regular channel for conveying it.

That the Ministers in the said Speech declare, " His Majesty has a
 " just and confident reliance, that we (his faithful Commons) are
 " animated with the same sentiments of loyalty, and the same
 " attachment to our excellent Constitution, which he had the
 " happiness to see so fully manifested in every part of the king-
 " dom."

To represent, that his faithful Commons have never failed in loyalty to his Majesty. It is new to them to be reminded of it. It is unnecessary and invidious to press it upon them by any example. This recommendation of loyalty, after his Majesty has sat for so many years, with the full support of all descriptions of his subjects, on the Throne of this kingdom, at a time of profound peace, and without any pretence of the existence or apprehension of war or conspiracy,

conspiracy, becomes in itself a source of no small jealousy to his faithful Commons ; as many circumstances lead us to apprehend that therein the Ministers have reference to some other measures and principles of loyalty, and to some other ideas of the Constitution, than the laws require, or the practice of Parliament will admit.

No regular communication of the proofs of loyalty and attachment to the Constitution, alluded to in the speech from the Throne, have been laid before this House, in order to enable us to judge of the nature, tendency, or occasion of them ; or in what particular acts they were displayed : but if we are to suppose the manifestations of loyalty (which are held out to us as an example for imitation) consist in certain Addresses delivered to his Majesty, promising support to his Majesty in the exercise of his prerogative, and thanking his Majesty for removing certain of his Ministers, on account of the votes they have given upon bills depending in Parliament,—if this be the example of loyalty alluded to in the speech from the Throne, then we must beg leave to express our serious concern for the impression which has been made on any of our fellow-subjects by misrepresentations, which have seduced them into a seeming approbation of proceedings subversive of their own freedom. We conceive, that the opinions delivered in these papers were not well considered ; nor were the parties duly informed of the nature of the matters on which they were called to determine, nor of those proceedings of Parliament which they were led to censure.

We shall act more advisedly.—The loyalty we shall manifest will not be the same with theirs ; but, we trust, it will be equally sincere, and more enlightened. It is no slight authority which shall persuade us (by receiving as proofs of loyalty the mistaken principles lightly taken up in these addresses) obliquely to criminate, with the heavy and ungrounded

ungrounded charge of disloyalty and disaffection, an uncorrupt, independent, and reforming Parliament *. Above all, we shall take care that none of the rights and privileges, always claimed, and since the accession of his Majesty's illustrious Family constantly exercised by this House (and which we hold and exercise in trust for the Commons of Great Britain, and for their benefit) shall be constructively surrendered, or even weakened and impaired under
C
ambiguous

* In that Parliament the House of Commons by two several resolutions put an end to the American War. Immediately on the change of Ministry, which ensued, in order to secure their own independence, and to prevent the accumulation of new burthens on the people by the growth of a Civil List debt, they passed the Establishment Bill. By that Bill thirty-six offices tenable by Members of Parliament were suppressed; and an order of payment was framed, by which the growth of any fresh debt was rendered impracticable. The debt on the Civil List from the beginning of the present reign had amounted to one million three hundred thousand pounds and upwards. Another act was passed for regulating the office of the Paymaster General, and the offices subordinate to it. A million of public money had sometimes been in the hands of the Paymasters: this act prevented the possibility of any money whatsoever being accumulated in that office in future. The offices of the Exchequer whose emoluments in time of war were excessive; and grew in exact proportion to the public burthens, were regulated; some of them suppressed, and the rest reduced to fixed salaries. To secure the freedom of election against the Crown, a bill was passed to disqualify all officers concerned in the collection of the revenue in any of its branches from voting in elections; a most important act, not only with regard to its primary object, the freedom of election, but as materially forwarding the due collection of revenue. For the same end, (the preserving the freedom of election) the House rescinded the famous judgment relative to the Middlesex Election, and expunged it from the Journals. On the principle of reformation of their own House, connected with a principle of public œconomy, an act passed for rendering contractors with Government incapable of a seat in Parliament. The India Bill, (unfortunately lost in the House of Lords) pursued the same idea to its completion; and disabled all servants of the East-India Company from a seat in that House for a certain time, and until their conduct was examined into and cleared. The remedy of infinite corruptions and of infinite disorders and oppressions, as well as the security of the most important objects of public œconomy, perished with that bill and that Parliament. That Parliament also instituted a Committee to enquire into the collection of the Revenue in all its branches, which prosecuted its duty with great vigour; and suggested several material improvements.

ambiguous phrases, and implications of censure on the late Parliamentary proceedings. If these claims are not well-founded, they ought to be honestly abandoned ; if they are just, they ought to be steadily and resolutely maintained.

Of his Majesty's own gracious disposition towards the true principles of our free constitution, his faithful Commons never did, or could, entertain a doubt : but we humbly beg leave to express to his Majesty our uneasiness concerning other new and unusual expressions of his Ministers, declaratory of a resolution " to support, in " *their just balance*, the rights and privileges of every branch of the " Legislature."

It were desirable that all hazardous theories concerning a balance of rights and privileges (a mode of expression wholly foreign to Parliamentary usage) might have been forborne. His Majesty's faithful Commons are well instructed in their own rights and privileges, which they are determined to maintain on the footing upon which they were handed down from their ancestors : They are not unacquainted with the rights and privileges of the House of Peers ; and they know and respect the lawful prerogatives of the Crown : But they do not think it safe to admit any thing concerning the existence of a balance of those rights, privileges, and prerogatives ; nor are they able to discern to what objects Ministers would apply their fiction of a balance ; nor what they would consider as a just one. These unauthorized doctrines have a tendency to stir improper discussions ; and to lead to mischievous innovations in the Constitution*.

That

* If these speculations are let loose, the House of Lords may quarrel with their share of the Legislature, as being limited with regard to the origination of grants to the Crown, and

That his faithful Commons most humbly recommend, instead of the inconsiderate speculations of unexperienced men, that on all occasions, resort should be had to the happy practice of Parliament, and to those solid maxims of Government which have prevailed since the accession of his Majesty's illustrious family, as furnishing the only safe principles on which the Crown and Parliament can proceed.

We

and the origination of Money Bills. The advisers of the Crown may think proper to bring its negative into ordinary use ; and even to dispute, whether a mere negative, compared with the deliberative power, exercised in the other Houses, be such a share in the Legislature, as to produce a due balance in favour of that branch ; and thus justify the previous interference of the Crown, in the manner lately used. The following will serve to shew how much foundation there is for great caution, concerning these novel speculations. Lord Shelburne, in his celebrated speech, April 8th, 1778, expresses himself as follows : Vide *Parliamentary Register*, Vol. X.

“ The noble and learned Lord on the Woolfack, in the debate which opened the business
“ of this day, asserted, that your Lordships were incompetent to make any alteration in a
“ Money Bill, or a Bill of Supply. I should be glad to see the matter fully and fairly
“ discussed, and the subject brought forward and argued upon precedent as well as all
“ its collateral relations. I should be pleased to see the question fairly committed, were
“ it for no other reason, but to hear the sleek smooth Contractors from the other House,
“ come to that bar and declare, that they, and they only, *could frame a money bill* ; and
“ they, and they *only*, could dispose of the *property of the Peers of Great-Britain*. Per-
“ haps some arguments more plausible than those I heard this day from the Woolfack,
“ to shew that the Commons have an uncontrollable, unqualified right, to bind your
“ Lordships' property, may be urged by them. At present I beg leave to differ from the
“ noble and learned Lord ; for until the claim, after a solemn discussion of the House, is
“ openly and directly relinquished, I shall continue to be of opinion, that your Lordships
“ have a right to *alter, amend, or reject a Money Bill*.”

The Duke of Richmond also, in his letter to the Volunteers of Ireland, speaks of several of the powers exercised by the House of Commons, in the light of usurpations ; and his Grace is of opinion, that when the people are restored to what he conceives to be their rights, in electing the House of Commons, the other Branches of the Legislature ought to be restored to theirs. Vide *Remembrancer*, Vol. XVI.

We think it the more necessary to be cautious on this head, as, in the last Parliament, the present Ministers had thought proper to countenance, if not to suggest, an attack upon the the most clear and undoubted rights and privileges of this House *.

Fearing, from these extraordinary admonitions, and from the new Doctrines, which seem to have dictated several unusual expressions, that his Majesty has been abused by false representations of the late proceedings in Parliament, we think it our duty respectfully to inform his Majesty, that no attempt whatever has been made against his lawful prerogatives, or against the rights and privileges of the Peers, by the late House of Commons, in any of their addresses, votes, or resolutions: Neither do we know of any proceeding by bill, in which it was proposed to abridge the extent of his Royal Prerogative: But, if such provision had existed in any bill, we protest, and we declare, against all Speeches, Acts or Addresses, from any persons whatsoever, which have a tendency to consider such bills, or the

* By an Act of Parliament, the Directors of the East India Company are restrained from acceptance of Bills drawn from India, beyond a certain amount, without the consent of the Commissioners of the Treasury. The late House of Commons finding Bills to an immense amount, drawn upon that body by their servants abroad, and knowing their circumstances to be exceedingly doubtful, came to a resolution providently cautioning the Lords of the Treasury against the acceptance of these Bills, until the House should otherwise direct. The Court Lords then took occasion to declare against the resolution as illegal, by the Commons undertaking to direct in the execution of a trust created by Act of Parliament. The House justly alarmed at this resolution, which went to the destruction of the whole of its superintending capacity, and particularly in matters relative to its own province of money, directed a Committee to search the Journals, and they found a regular series of precedents, commencing from the remotest of those records, and carried on to that day, by which it appeared, that the House had interfered by an authoritative advice and admonition, upon every act of executive Government without exception; and in many much stronger cases than that which the Lords thought proper to quarrel with.

the persons concerned in them, as just objects of any kind of censure and punishment from the Throne. Necessary reformati^ons may hereafter require, as they have frequently done in former times, limitations, and abridgments, and in some cases an entire extinction of some branch of prerogative. If bills should be improper in the form in which they appear in the House where they originate, they are liable, by the wisdom of this Constitution, to be corrected, and even to be totally set aside, elsewhere. This is the known, the legal, and the safe remedy: But whatever, by the manifestation of the Royal displeasure, tends to intimidate individual Members from proposing, or this House from receiving, debating, and passing bills, tends to prevent even the beginning of every reformation in the State; and utterly destroys the deliberative capacity of Parliament.— We therefore claim, demand, and insist upon it, as our undoubted right, that no persons shall be deemed proper objects of animadversion by the Crown, in any mode whatever, for the votes which they give, or the propositions which they make, in Parliament.

We humbly conceive, that Besides its share of the Legislative power, and its right of impeachment, that, by the law and usage of Parliament, this House has other powers and capacities, which it is bound to maintain. This House is assured, that our humble advice on the exercise of prerogative will be heard with the same attention with which it has ever been regarded; and that it will be followed by the same effects which it has ever produced, during the happy and glorious Reigns of his Majesty's Royal Progenitors; not doubting but that, in all those points, we shall be considered as a Council of wisdom and weight to advise, and not merely as an accuser of competence to criminate*. This House claims both capacities;

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and

* "I observe at the same time, that there is no charge or complaint suggested against my present Ministers;"—*The King's answer, 25th February, 1784, to the Address of the House of Commons. Vide, Resolutions of the House of Commons, Printed for Debrett, P. 31*

and we trust that we shall be left to our free discretion which of them we shall employ as best calculated for his Majesty's, and the National service. — Whenever we shall see it expedient to offer our advice concerning his Majesty's servants, who are those of the public, we confidently hope, that the personal favour of any Minister, or any set of Ministers, will not be more dear to his Majesty, than the credit and character of an House of Commons. It is an experiment full of peril to put the representative wisdom and justice of his Majesty's people in the wrong; it is a crooked and desperate design, leading to mischief, the extent of which no human wisdom can foresee, to attempt to form a prerogative party in the nation, to be resorted to as occasion shall require, in derogation from the authority of the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament assembled: It is a contrivance full of danger, for Ministers to set up the representative and constituent bodies of the Commons of this kingdom as two separate and distinct powers, formed to counterpoise each other, leaving the preference in the hands of secret advisers of the Crown. In such a situation of things, these advisers, taking advantage of the differences which may accidentally arise, or may purposely be fomented between them, will have it in their choice to resort to the one or the other, as may best suit the purposes of their sinister ambition. By exciting an emulation and contest between the representative and constituent bodies, as parties contending for credit and influence at the Throne, Sacrifices will be made by both; and the whole can end in nothing else than the destruction of the dearest rights and liberties of the nation. If there must be another mode of conveying the collective sense of the people to the Throne than that by the House of Commons, it ought to be fixed and defined, and its authority ought to be settled: It ought not to exist in so precarious and dependent a state as that Ministers should have it in their power, at their own mere pleasure, to acknowledge it with respect, or to reject it with scorn.

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It is the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to dissolve Parliament; but we beg leave to lay before his Majesty, that it is, of all the trusts vested in his Majesty, the most critical and delicate, and that in which this House has the most reason to require, not only the good faith, but the favour of the Crown. His Commons are not always upon a par with his Ministers in an application to popular judgment: It is not in the power of the members of this House to go to their election at the moment the most favourable for them. It is in the power of the Crown to choose a time for their dissolution whilst great and arduous matters of state and legislation are depending, which may be easily misunderstood, and which cannot be fully explained before that misunderstanding may prove fatal to the honour that belongs, and to the consideration that is due, to Members of Parliament.

With his Majesty is the gift of all the rewards, the honours, distinctions, favour, and graces of the state; with his Majesty is the mitigation of all the rigours of the law; and we rejoice to see the Crown possessed of trusts calculated to obtain good-will, and charged with duties which are popular and pleasing. Our trusts are of a different kind. Our duties are harsh and invidious in their nature; and justice and safety is all we can expect in the exercise of them. We are to offer salutary, which is not always pleasing, council: We are to enquire and to accuse: And the objects of our enquiry and charge will be for the most part persons of wealth, power, and extensive connections: We are to make rigid laws for the preservation of revenue, which of necessity more or less confine some action, or restrain some function, which before was free: What is the most critical and invidious of all, the whole body of the public impositions originate from us, and the hand of the House of Commons is seen and felt in every burthen that presses on the people. Whilst,
ultimately,

ultimately, we are serving them, and in the first instance whilst we are serving his Majesty, it will be hard, indeed, if we should see a House of Commons the victim of its zeal and fidelity, sacrificed by his Ministers to those very popular discontents which shall be excited by our dutiful endeavours for the security and greatness of his Throne. No other consequence can result from such an example, but that, in future, the House of Commons, consulting its safety at the expence of its duties, and suffering the whole energy of the State to be relaxed, will shrink from every service, which, however necessary, is of a great and arduous nature; or that, willing to provide for the public necessities, and, at the same time, to secure the means of performing that task, they will exchange independence for protection, and will court a subservient existence through the favour of those Ministers of State, or those Secret Advisers, who ought themselves to stand in awe of the Commons of this realm.

An House of Commons, respected by his Ministers, is essential to his Majesty's service: It is fit that they should yield to Parliament, and not that Parliament should be broken and new modelled until it is fitted to their purposes. If our authority is only to be held up when we coincide in opinion with his Majesty's Advisers, but is to be set at nought the moment it differs from them, the House of Commons will sink into a mere appendage of Administration; and will lose that independent character which, inseparably connecting the honour and reputation with the acts of this House, enables us to afford a real, effective, and substantial support to his government. It is the deference shewn to our opinion, when we dissent from the servants of the Crown, which alone can give authority to the proceedings of this House, when it concurs with their measures.

That

That authority once lost, the credit of his Majesty's Crown will be impaired in the eyes of all nations. Foreign powers, who may yet wish to revive a friendly intercourse with this nation, will look in vain for that hold which gave a connection with Great-Britain the preference to an alliance with any other State. An House of Commons, of which Ministers were known to stand in awe, where every thing was necessarily discussed, on principles fit to be openly and publicly avowed, and which could not be retracted or varied without danger, furnished a ground of confidence in the public faith, which the engagement of no State dependent on the fluctuation of personal favour, and private advice, can ever pretend to. If faith with the House of Commons, the grand security for the national faith itself, can be broken with impunity, a wound is given to the political importance of Great Britain, which will not easily be healed.

That there was a great variance between the late House of Commons and certain persons, whom his Majesty has been advised to make and continue as Ministers, in defiance of the advice of that House, is notorious to the world. That House did not confide in those Ministers; and they withheld their confidence from them for reasons for which posterity will honour and respect the names of those who composed that House of Commons, distinguished for its independence. They could not confide in persons who have shewn a disposition to dark and dangerous intrigues. By these intrigues they have weakened, if not destroyed, the clear assurance which his Majesty's people, and which all nations ought to have, of what are, and what are not, the real acts of his government.

If it should be seen that his Ministers may continue in their offices, without any signification to them of his Majesty's displeasure

at any of their measures, whilst persons considerable for their rank, and known to have had access to his Majesty's sacred person, can, with impunity, abuse that advantage, and employ his Majesty's name to disavow and counteract the proceedings of his official servants, nothing but distrust, discord, debility, contempt of all authority, and general confusion, can prevail in his government.

This we lay before his Majesty, with humility and concern, as the inevitable effect of a spirit of intrigue in his executive government; an evil which we have but too much reason to be persuaded exists and increases. During the course of the last session it broke out in a manner the most alarming. This evil was infinitely aggravated by the unauthorized, but not disavowed use which has been made of his Majesty's name, for the purpose of the most unconstitutional, corrupt, and dishonourable influence on the minds of the Members of Parliament, that ever was practised in this kingdom: No attention, even to the exterior decorum, in the practice of corruption, and intimidation employed on Peers, was observed: Several Peers were obliged under menaces to retract their declarations, and to recall their proxies.

The Commons have the deepest interest in the purity and integrity of the Peerage. The Peers dispose of all the property in the kingdom, in the last resort; and they dispose of it on their honour and not on their oaths, as all the members of every other tribunal in the kingdom must do; though in them the proceeding is not conclusive. We have, therefore, a right to demand that no application shall be made to Peers of such a nature as may give room to call in question, much less to attain, our sole security for all that we possess. This corrupt proceeding appeared to the House of Commons, who are the natural guardians of the purity of Parliament,
and

and of the purity of every branch of judicature, a most reprehensible and dangerous practice, tending to shake the very foundation of the authority of the House of Peers;—and they branded it as such by their resolution.

The House had not sufficient evidence to enable them legally to punish this practice, but they had enough to caution them against all confidence in the authors and abettors of it. They performed their duty in humbly advising his Majesty against the employment of such Ministers; but his Majesty was advised to keep those Ministers, and to dissolve that Parliament. The House, aware of the importance and urgency of its duty with regard to the British interests in India, which were and are in the utmost disorder, and in the utmost peril, most humbly requested his Majesty not to dissolve the Parliament during the course of their very critical proceedings on that subject. His Majesty's gracious condescension to that request was conveyed in the Royal faith, pledged to an House of Parliament, and solemnly delivered from the throne. It was but a very few days after a committee had been, with the consent and concurrence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, appointed for an enquiry into certain accounts delivered to the House by the Court of Directors, and then actually engaged in that enquiry, that the Ministers, regardless of the assurance given from the Crown to an House of Commons, did dissolve that Parliament. We most humbly submit to his Majesty's consideration the consequences of this their breach of public faith.

Whilst the Members of the House of Commons, under that security, were engaged in his Majesty's and the national business, endeavours were industriously used to calumniate those whom it was found impracticable to corrupt. The reputation of the Members,
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and the reputation of the House itself, was undermined in every part of the kingdom.

In the Speech from the Throne relative to India, we are cautioned by the Ministers, " not to lose sight of the effect any measure may " have on the constitution of our country." We are apprehensive that a calumnious report spread abroad of an attack upon his Majesty's prerogative by the late House of Commons, may have made an impression on his Royal mind, and have given occasion to this unusual admonition to the present. This attack is charged to have been made in the late Parliament, by a bill which passed the House of Commons in the last session of that Parliament, for the regulation of the affairs, for the preservation of the commerce, and for the amendment of the government of this nation, in the East-Indies.

That his Majesty and his people may have an opportunity of entering into the ground of this injurious charge, we beg leave humbly to acquaint his Majesty, that, far from having made any infringement whatsoever on any part of his Royal prerogative, that bill did, for a limited time, give to his Majesty certain powers never before possessed by the Crown; and for this his present Ministers (who, rather than fall short in the number of their calumnies, employ some that are contradictory) have slandered this House, as aiming at the extension of an unconstitutional influence in his Majesty's Crown. This pretended attempt to increase the influence of the Crown, they were weak enough to endeavour to persuade his Majesty's people was amongst the causes which excited his Majesty's resentment against his late Ministers.

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Further, to remove the impressions of this calumny concerning an attempt in the House of Commons against his prerogative, it is proper to inform his Majesty, that the territorial possessions in the East Indies never have been declared, by any public judgment, act, or instrument, or any resolution of Parliament whatsoever, to be the subject matter of his Majesty's prerogative; nor have they ever been understood as belonging to his ordinary administration, or to be annexed or united to his Crown; but that they are acquisition of a new and peculiar description*, unknown to the ancient executive constitution of this country.

From time to time, therefore, Parliament provided for their government according to its discretion, and to its opinion of what was required by the public necessities. We do not know that his
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* The territorial possessions in the East Indies were acquired to the Company, in virtue of grants from the Great Mogul, in the nature of offices and jurisdictions, to be held under *him*, and dependent upon *his* Crown; with the express condition of being obedient to orders from *his* Court, and of paying an annual tribute to *his* treasury. It is true, that no obedience is yielded to these orders; and for some time past there has been no payment made of this tribute. But it is under a grant, so conditioned, that they still hold. To subject the King of Great Britain as tributary to a foreign power, by the acts of his subjects—to suppose the grant valid, and yet the condition void—to suppose it good for the King, and insufficient for the Company—to suppose it an interest divisible between the parties.—These are some few of the many legal difficulties to be surmounted, before the common law of England can acknowledge the East India Company's Asiatic affairs to be a subject matter of *prerogative*, as to bring it within the verge of English jurisprudence. It is a very anomalous species of power and property which is held by the East India Company. Our English prerogative law does not furnish principles, much less precedents by which it can be defined or adjusted. Nothing but the eminent dominion of Parliament over every British subject in every concern, and in every circumstance in which he is placed, can adjust this new intricate matter. Parliament may act wisely or unwisely; justly or unjustly; but Parliament alone is competent to it.

Majesty was entitled, by prerogative, to exercise any act of authority whatsoever in the Company's affairs, or that, in effect, such authority ever has been exercised. His Majesty's patronage was not taken away by that bill; because it is notorious that his Majesty never originally had the appointment of a single officer, civil or military, in the Company's establishment in India; nor has the least degree of patronage ever been acquired to the Crown in any other manner or measure, than as the power was thought expedient to be granted by act of Parliament; that is, by the very same authority by which the offices were disposed of and regulated in the bill, which his Majesty's servants have falsely and injuriously represented as infringing upon the prerogative of the Crown.

Before the year 1773 the whole Administration of India, and the whole patronage to office there, was in the hands of the East India Company. The East-India Company is not a branch of his Majesty's Prerogative Administration, nor does that body exercise any species of authority under it, nor indeed from any British title, that does not derive all its legal validity from Acts of Parliament.

When a claim was asserted to the India territorial possessions in the occupation of the Company, these possessions were not claimed as parcel of his Majesty's patrimonial estate, or as a fruit of the ancient inheritance of his Crown. They were claimed for the public. And when agreements were made with the East-India Company concerning any composition for the holding, or any participation of the profits of those territories, the agreement was made with the public, and the preambles of the several acts have uniformly so stated it. These agreements were not made (even nominally) with his Majesty but with Parliament; and the bills making and establishing such agreements always originated in this House, which appropriated the
money

money to await the disposition of Parliament, without the ceremony of previous consent from the Crown even so much as suggested by any of his Ministers ; which previous consent is an observance of decorum, not indeed of strict right, but generally paid when a new appropriation takes place in any part of his Majesty's prerogative revenues.

In pursuance of a right thus uniformly recognized, and uniformly acted on, when Parliament undertook the reformation of the East-India Company in 1773, a commission was appointed as the commission in the late bill was appointed ; and it was made to continue for a term of years, as the commission in the late bill was to continue ; all the Commissioners were named in Parliament, as in the late bill they were named. As they received, so they held their offices, wholly independent of the Crown ; they held them for a fixed term ; they were not removeable by an Address of either House, or even of both Houses of Parliament, a precaution observed in the late bill, relative to the Commissioners proposed therein ; nor were they bound by the strict rules of proceeding which regulated and restrained the late Commissioners against all possible abuse of a power, which could not fail of being diligently and zealously watched by the Ministers of the Crown, and the Proprietors of the Stock, as well as by Parliament. Their proceedings were, in that bill, directed to be of such a nature as easily to subject them to the strictest revision of both, in case of any malversation.

In the year 1780, an Act of Parliament again made provision for the Government of those territories for another four years, without any sort of reference to prerogative ; nor was the least objection taken at the second, more than at the first of those periods, as if an infringement.

infringement had been made upon the rights of the Crown; yet his Majesty's Ministers have thought fit to represent the late commission as an entire innovation on the Constitution, and the setting-up a new order and estate in the nation, tending to the subversion of the monarchy itself.

If the Government of the East-Indies, other than by his Majesty's prerogative, be, in effect, a fourth Order in the Commonwealth, this Order has long existed; because the East-India Company has for many years enjoyed it in the fullest extent, and does at this day enjoy the whole administration of those provinces, and the patronage to offices throughout that great empire, except as it is controuled by Act of Parliament.

It was the ill condition, and ill Administration of the Company's affairs, which induced this House (merely as a temporary establishment) to vest the same powers which the Company did before possess, (and no other) for a limited time, and under very strict directions, in proper hands, until they could be restored, or further provision made concerning them. It was therefore no creation whatever of a new power, but the removal of an old power, long since created, and then existing, from the management of those persons who had manifestly and dangerously abused their trust. This House, which well knows the Parliamentary Origin of all the Company's powers and privileges, and is not ignorant or negligent of the authority which may vest those powers and privileges in others, if justice and the public safety so require, is conscious to itself, that it no more creates a new Order in the state, by making occasional Trustees for the direction of the Company, than it originally did in giving a much more permanent trust to the Directors, or to the General Court of that Body. The monopoly of the East-India Company was a derogation

gation from the general freedom of trade belonging to his Majesty's people. The powers of Government, and of peace and war, are parts of Prerogative of the highest order. Of our competence to restrain the rights of all his subjects by Act of Parliament, and to vest those high and eminent Prerogatives even in a particular Company of Merchants, there has been no question. We beg leave most humbly to claim as our right, and as a right which this House has always used, to frame such bills, for the regulation of that commerce, and of the territories held by the East-India Company, and every thing relating to them, as to our discretion shall seem fit: and we assert and maintain, that therein we follow, and do not innovate on the Constitution.

That his Majesty's Ministers, misled by their ambition, have endeavoured, if possible, to form a faction in the country against the popular part of the constitution; and have therefore thought proper to add to their slanderous accusation against a House of Parliament, relative to his Majesty's prerogative, another of a different nature, calculated for the purpose of raising fears and jealousies among the corporate bodies of the kingdom, and of persuading uninformed persons belonging to those corporations to look to, and to make Addresses to them as protectors of their rights, under their several Charters, from the designs which they, without any ground, charged the then House of Commons to have formed against *Charters in general*. For this purpose they have not scrupled to assert, that the exertion of his Majesty's prerogative in the late precipitate change in his Administration, and the dissolution of the late Parliament, were measures adopted in order to rescue the people and their rights out of the hands of the House of Commons, their Representatives.

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We trust that his Majesty's subjects are not yet so far deluded as to believe that the Charters, or that any other of their local or general privileges can have a solid security in any place but where that security has always been looked for, and always found, in the House of Commons. Miserable and precarious indeed would be the state of their franchises, if they were to find no defence but from that quarter from whence they have always been attacked *. But the late

* The attempt upon charters and the privileges of the corporate bodies of the kingdom in the reigns of Charles the Second, and James the Second, was made by the *Crown*. It was carried on by the ordinary course of law, in the courts instituted for the security of the property and franchises of the people. This attempt made by the *Crown*, was attended with complete success. The corporate rights of the city of London, and of all the companies it contains, were by solemn judgment of law declared forfeited, and all their franchises, privileges, properties and estates, were of course seized into the hands of the *Crown*. The injury was from the Crown; the redress was by Parliament. A bill was brought into the *House of Commons*, by which the judgment against the city of London, and against the companies was reversed; and this bill passed the House of Lords without any complaint of a trespass on their jurisdiction, although the bill was for a reversal of a judgment in law. By this act, which is in the second of William and Mary, chap. 8, the question of forfeiture of that charter is for ever taken out of the power of any court of law. No cognizance can be taken of it except in Parliament.

Although the act abovementioned has declared the judgment against the corporation of London to be *illegal*; yet Blackstone makes no scruple of asserting, that "perhaps in strictness of law, the proceedings in most of them [the Quo Warranto causes] were sufficiently regular," leaving it in doubt, whether this regularity did not apply to the corporation of London, as well as to any of the rest; and he seems to blame the proceeding (as most blameable it was) not so much on account of illegality, as for the Crown's having employed a legal proceeding for political purposes. He calls it "an exertion of an act of law for the purposes of the State."

The same security which was given to the city of London, would have been extended to all the corporations, if the House of Commons could have prevailed. But the bill for that purpose passed but by a majority of one in the Lords; and it was entirely lost by a prorogation, which is the act of the Crown. Small, indeed, was the security which

late House of Commons in passing that bill, made no attack upon any powers or privileges, except such as an House of Commons has frequently

which the corporation of London enjoyed, before the act of William and Mary, and which all the other corporations secured by no statute, enjoy at this hour, if strict law was employed against them. The use of that strict law has been always rendered very delicate by the same means, by which the almost unmeasured legal powers residing, (and in many instances dangerously residing in the Crown) are kept within due bounds; I mean, that strong superintending power in the House of Commons, which inconsiderate people have been prevailed on to condemn as trenching on prerogative. Strict law is by no means such a friend to the rights of the subject, as they have been taught to believe. They who have been most conversant in this kind of learning will be most sensible of the danger of submitting corporate rights of high political importance to these subordinate tribunals. The general heads of law on that subject are vulgar and trivial. On them there is not much question. But it is far from easy to determine what special acts, or what special neglects of action shall subject corporations to a forfeiture. There is so much laxity in this doctrine, that great room is left for favour or prejudice, which might give to the Crown an entire dominion over those corporations. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly true, that every subordinate corporate right ought to be subject to control; to superior direction; and even to forfeiture upon just cause. In this reason and law agree. In every judgment given on a corporate right of great political importance, the policy and prudence make no small part of the question. To these considerations a court of law is not competent; and indeed an attempt at the least intermixture of such ideas with the matter of law, could have no other effect, than wholly to corrupt the judicial character of the court, in which such a cause should come to be tried. It is besides to be remarked, that if in virtue of a legal process a forfeiture should be adjudged, the court of law has no power to modify or mitigate. The whole franchise is annihilated, and the corporate property goes into the hands of the Crown. They who hold the new doctrines concerning the power of the House of Commons, ought well to consider in such a case by what means the corporate rights could be revived, or the property could be recovered out of the hands of the Crown. But Parliament can do, what the courts neither can do nor ought to attempt. Parliament is competent to give due weight to all political considerations. It may modify; it may mitigate; and it may render perfectly secure all that it does not think fit to take away. It is not likely that Parliament will ever draw to itself the cognizance of questions concerning ordinary corporations, farther than to protect them in case attempts are made to induce a forfeiture of their franchises.

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frequently attacked, and will attack (and they trust, in the end, with their wonted success) that is, upon those which are corruptly and oppressively administered; and this House do faithfully assure his Majesty, that we will correct, and, if necessary for the purpose, as far as in us lies, will wholly destroy every species of power and authority exercised by British subjects to the oppression, wrong, and detriment of the people, and to the impoverishment and desolation of the countries subject to it.

The propagators of the calumnies against that House of Parliament have been indefatigable in exaggerating the supposed injury done

The case of the East India Company is different even from that of the greatest of these corporations. No monopoly of trade, beyond their own limits, is vested in the corporate body of any town or city in the Kingdom. Even within these limits the monopoly is not general. This Company has the monopoly of the trade of half the world. The first corporation of the kingdom, has for the object of its jurisdiction only a few matters of subordinate police. The East-India Company governs an empire through all its concerns, and all its departments, from the lowest office of economy to the highest councils of state,—an empire to which Great-Britain is in comparison but a respectable province. To leave these concerns without superior cognizance would be madness; to leave them to be judged in the courts below on the principles of a confined jurisprudence, would be folly. It is well if the whole Legislative Power is competent to the correction of abuses, which are commensurate to the immensity of the object they affect. The idea of an absolute power has indeed its terrors; but that objection lies to every parliamentary proceeding; and as no other can regulate the abuses of such a Charter, it is fittest that sovereign authority should be exercised, where it is most likely to be attended with the most effectual correctives. These correctives are furnished by the nature and course of Parliamentary proceedings, and by the infinitely diversified characters who compose the two Houses. In effect and virtually they form a vast number, variety, and succession of judges and jurors. There the fulness, the freedom, and publicity of discussion, leaves it easy to distinguish what are acts of power, and what the determinations of equity and reason. There prejudice corrects prejudice, and the different asperities of party zeal mitigate and neutralize each other. So far from violence being the general characteristic of the proceedings of Parliament, whatever the beginnings of any Parliamentary process may be, its general fault in the end is, that it is found incomplete and ineffectual.

done to the East-India Company by the suspension of the authorities which they have, in every instance, abused ; as if power had been wrested, by wrong and violence, from just and prudent hands ; but they have, with equal care, concealed the weighty grounds and reasons on which that House had adopted the most moderate of all possible expedients for rescuing the natives of India from oppression, and for saving the interests of the real and honest Proprietors of their Stock, as well as that great national, commercial concern, from imminent ruin.

The Ministers aforesaid have also caused it to be reported, that the House of Commons have confiscated the property of the East-India Company. It is the reverse of truth. The whole management was a trust for the Proprietors, under their own inspection (and it was so provided for in the bill) and under the inspection of Parliament. That bill, so far from confiscating the Company's property, was the only one which, for several years past, did not, in some shape or other, affect their property, or restrain them in the disposition of it.

It is proper that his Majesty and all his people should be informed, that the House of Commons have proceeded, with regard to the East-India Company, with a degree of care, circumspection, and deliberation, which has not been equalled in the history of Parliamentary proceedings. For sixteen years the state and condition of that body has never been wholly out of their view : In the year 1767 the House took those objects into consideration, in a Committee of the whole House : The business was pursued in the following year : In the year 1772, two Committees were appointed for the same purpose, which examined into their affairs with much diligence, and made very ample Reports : In the year 1773, the proceedings

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were carried to an Act of Parliament, which proved ineffectual to its purpose ; the oppressions and abuses in India having since rather increased than diminished, on account of the greatness of the temptations and convenience of the opportunities, which got the better of the Legislative provisions calculated against ill practices, then in their beginnings : Insomuch that, in 1781, two Committees were again instituted, who have made seventeen reports. It was upon the most minute, exact, and laborious collection and discussion of facts, that the late House of Commons proceeded in the reform which they attempted in the Administration of India, but which has been frustrated by ways and means the most dishonourable to his Majesty's Government, and the most pernicious to the Constitution of this kingdom. His Majesty was so sensible of the disorders in the Company's administration, that the consideration of that subject was no less than six times recommended to this House in Speeches from the Throne.

The result of the Parliamentary enquiries has been, that the East-India Company was found totally corrupted, and totally perverted from the purposes of its institution, whether political or commercial ; that the powers of war and peace given by the Charter had been abused, by kindling hostilities in every quarter for the purposes of rapine ; that almost all the treaties of peace they have made, have only given cause to so many breaches of public faith ; that countries once the most flourishing are reduced to a state of indigence, decay, and depopulation, to the diminution of our strength, and to the infinite dishonour of our national character ; that the laws of this kingdom are notoriously, and almost in every instance, despised ; that the servants of the Company, by the purchase of qualifications to vote in the General Court, and, and at length, by getting the Company itself deeply in their debt, have obtained the entire and
absolute

absolute mastery in the body, by which they ought to have been ruled and coerced. Thus their malversations in office are supported instead of being checked by the Company. The whole of the affairs of that body are reduced to a most perilous situation; and many millions of innocent and deserving men who are under the protection of this nation, and who ought to be protected by it, are oppressed by a most despotic and rapacious tyranny. The Company and their Servants having strengthened themselves by this confederacy, have set at defiance the authority and admonitions of this House employed to reform them; and when this House had selected certain principal delinquents, whom they declared it the duty of the Company to recall, the Company held out its legal privileges against all reformation; positively refused to recall them; and supported those who had fallen under the just censure of this House, with new and stronger marks of countenance and approbation.

The late House discovering the reversed situation of the Company, by which the nominal servants are really the masters, and the offenders are become their own judges, thought fit to examine into the state of their commerce; and they have also discovered that their commercial affairs are in the greatest disorder; that their debts have accumulated beyond any present or obvious future means of payment, at least under the actual administration of their affairs; that this condition of the East India Company has begun to affect the sinking fund itself, on which the public credit of the kingdom rests, a million and upwards being due to the Customs, which that House of Commons, whose intentions towards the Company have been so grossly misrepresented, were indulgent enough to respite. And thus, instead of confiscating their property, the Company received without interest (which in such a case had been before charged) the use of a very large sum of the public money. The revenues are under the
peculiar

peculiar care of this House, not only as the revenues originate from us, but as, on every failure of the funds set apart for support of the national credit, or to provide for the national strength and safety, the task of supplying every deficiency falls upon his Majesty's faithful Commons, this House must, in effect, tax the people. The House therefore, at every moment, incurs the hazard of becoming obnoxious to its Constituents.

The enemies of the late House of Commons resolved, if possible, to bring on that event. They therefore endeavoured to misrepresent the provident means adopted by the House of Commons for keeping off this invidious necessity, as an attack on the rights of the East-India Company; for they well knew, that on the one hand, if, for want of proper regulation and relief, the Company should become insolvent, or even stop payment, the national credit and commerce would sustain an heavy blow; and that calamity would be justly imputed to Parliament, which after such long enquiries, and such frequent admonitions from his Majesty, had neglected so essential and so urgent an article of their duty: On the other hand they knew, that, wholly corrupted as the Company is, nothing effectual could be done to preserve that interest from ruin, without taking for a time the national objects of their trust out of their hands; and then a cry would be industriously raised against the House of Commons, as depriving British Subjects of their legal privileges. The restraint, being plain and simple, must be easily understood by those who would be brought with great difficulty, to comprehend the intricate detail of matters of fact, which rendered this suspension of the administration of India absolutely necessary on motives of justice, of policy, of public honour, and public safety.

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The House of Commons had not been able to devise a method, by which the redress of grievances could be effected through the Authors of those grievances ; nor could they imagine how corruptions could be purified by the corruptors and the corrupted ; nor do we now conceive, how any reformation can proceed from the known abettors and supporters of the persons who have been guilty of the misdemeanors which Parliament has reprobated, and who for their own ill purposes have given countenance to a false and delusive state of the Company's affairs, fabricated to mislead Parliament, and to impose upon the nation *.

Your Commons feel, with a just resentment, the inadequate estimate which your Ministers have formed of the importance of this great concern. They call on us to act upon the principles of those who have not enquired into the subject ; and to condemn those who, with the most laudable diligence, have examined and scrutinized every part of it. The deliberations of Parliament have been broken ; the season of the year is unfavourable ; many of us are new Members, who must be wholly unacquainted with the subject, which lies remote from the ordinary course of general information.

We are cautioned against an infringement of the Constitution ; and it is impossible to know, what the secret advisers of the Crown, who have driven out the late Ministers for their conduct in
I Parliament

* The purpose of the misrepresentation being now completely answered, there is no doubt but the Committee in this Parliament, appointed by the Ministers themselves, will justify, the grounds upon which the last Parliament proceeded ; and will lay open to the world, the dreadful state of the Company's affairs, and the grossness of their own calumnies upon this head. By delay the new Assembly is come into the disgraceful situation of allowing a dividend of eight per cent. by Act of Parliament, without the least matter before them to justify the granting of any dividend at all.

Parliament, and have dissolved the late Parliament for a pretended attack upon prerogative, will consider as such an infringement. We are not furnished with a rule, the observance of which can make us safe from the resentment of the Crown, even by an implicit obedience to the dictates of the Ministers who have advised that Speech: We know not how soon those Ministers may be disavowed; and how soon the Members of this House, for our very agreement with them, may be considered as objects of his Majesty's displeasure. Until by his Majesty's goodness and wisdom the late example is completely done away, we are not free.

We are well aware, in providing for the affairs of the East, what an adult strength of abuse, and of wealth and influence growing out of that abuse, his Majesty's Commons had, in the last Parliament, and we still have, to struggle. We are sensible that the influence of that wealth, in a much larger degree and measure than at any former period, may have penetrated into the very quarter from whence alone any real reformation can be expected*.

* This will be evident to those who consider the number and description of Directors and Servants of the East India Company, chosen into the present Parliament. The light in which the present Ministers hold the labours of the House of Commons, in searching into the disorders in the Indian Administration, and all its endeavours for the reformation of the Government there, without any distinction of times, or of the persons concerned, will appear from the following extract from a speech of the present Lord Chancellor. After making an high flown panegyrick on those whom the House of Commons had condemned by their resolutions, he said—"Let us not be misled by reports from Committees of another House, to which, I again repeat, *I pay as much attention, as I would do to the history of Robinson Crusoe.* Let the conduct of the East-India Company be fairly and fully enquired into; let it be acquitted or condemned by evidence brought to the bar of the House. Without entering very deep into the subject, let me reply in a few words to an observation which fell from a noble and learned Lord, that the Company's finances are distressed, and that they owe at this moment, a million sterling, to the nation. When such a charge is brought, will Parliament in its justice forget, that the Company is restricted from employing *that credit, which its great and flourishing situation gives to it?*"

If

If, therefore, in the arduous affairs recommended to us, our Proceedings should be ill adapted, feeble and ineffectual ; if no delinquency should be prevented, and no delinquent should be called to account ; if every person should be caressed, promoted, and raised in power, in proportion to the enormity of his offences ; if no relief should be given to any of the natives unjustly dispossessed of their rights, jurisdictions, and properties ; if no cruel and unjust exactions shall be forborne ; if the source of no peculation, or oppressive gain should be cut off ; if, by the omission of the opportunities that were in our hands, our Indian empire should fall into ruin irretrievable ; and in its fall crush the credit, and overwhelm the Revenues of this country, we stand acquitted to our honour, and to our conscience, who have reluctantly seen the weightiest interests of our country, at times the most critical to its dignity and safety, rendered the sport of the inconsiderate and unmeasured ambition of individuals, and by that means the wisdom of his Majesty's Government degraded in the public estimation, and the policy and character of this renowned nation rendered contemptible in the eyes of all Europe.

It passed in the Negative.

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Sackville's Peerage: when adverting to the exercise of the King's Prerogative
in creating Peers, and a possible necessity for calling forth the latent Powers of
the House, against extraordinary stretches of the Prerogative; his Lordship
said, "It had been imagined that the House of Peers had it not in their
Power to right itself. The supposition was founded in error. Lord Chan-
cellor West, in his Book upon the Peerage, pretty clearly evinced to his mind,
that there were latent Powers belonging to the House of Lords, which if
called forth by sufficient Occasion, and duly and spiritedly exercised, were
equal to the Correction of any Abuses of the Prerogative which might be
attempted."—See the Parliamentary Register, Vol. VIII. Page 110.